

## NIGHT AND DAWNING

By H. M. Egbert

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"I don't know what to do with myself evenings," sighed Ronald Cray, leaning out of the back window of his bachelor apartment and surveying the gloomy flats around him.

Two months before he had been summoned home from New Mexico, where his power dam had made him famous, to take charge of the engineering department of his company at headquarters. His salary was ample, he had wealth, he was only twenty-five; yet he had managed to make no acquaintances in the big city.

A free life in the West had made him different from the average city-bred young man; he thought the metropolis stiff and its people devoid of interest.

Suddenly, as he leaned out, surveying the huge buildings and speculating how many thousand lives ran on in them, a light sprang into being in the building opposite, on the fifth floor on a level with his. Behind a drawn shade he saw the silhouette of a man.

He was stooping over a table and, as Cray watched, he saw the shadow of a woman behind him. Suddenly her hand plunged downward. The elongated object in it looked like a poniard. It struck the man in the side of the neck and he rolled over.

The woman stood looking at him for a moment; then, with a gesture of triumph, she flung the poniard out of the window, raising the shade a little. Cray heard a metallic tinkle in the court below. Then followed darkness.

He leaned out, astounded at what he had seen and hardly believing it real. How long he waited he did not know. Suddenly his bell rang.

He went out into the passage and saw, standing outside the door, one of the most beautiful women whom

he had ever met. She was twenty-three or four. Her eyes gleamed with feverish intensity, her hair was disheveled and her hands were red.

"Save me! Hide me! Help me!" she pleaded.

Cray did not hesitate an instant. He pulled her through the doorway and led her to the bathroom. He filled the basin and washed her hands, drying them on a towel afterward. Then he took her into his spare room.

"You're quite safe here," he said in a low voice. "Nobody saw you come



Saw the Shadow of a Woman Behind Him

in. You can stay as long as you want to."

She crouched in a corner, glaring at him like a hunted beast. He hesitated, then he closed and bolted the window and withdrew, leaving the door open.

For half an hour he waited, fearing that he would hear the bolt snap, that she would try to plunge down into the court below. But hardly a